



# FAIRFAX COUNTY

## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

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V I R G I N I A

October 1, 2001

01-10

To: All Architects, Builders, Developers, Engineers, and Surveyors Practicing in Fairfax County

Subject: Resolution of Issues Associated with Plans Submitted to the Environmental Facilities Review Division

Beginning immediately, several new procedures will be implemented to augment communication between the design community and the review staff of the Environmental Facilities Review Division (EFRD). These procedures were developed jointly with representatives from the design community in "action groups" that were formed as a result of the Engineers and Surveyors Institute (ESI) Workshop on the Fairfax County Plan Approval Process Review conducted in January of this year. They are intended to provide mechanisms to resolve design issues associated with development plans submitted to EFRD for review. Specifically, they address three stages of the design/review process:

- Questions and issues that arise during the design phase of the project.
- Identification and discussion of key issues just prior to plan submission
- Questions and issues that arise as a result of the review of the first submission of the plan.

Additionally, a new Project Management Program is hereby implemented to provide a single point of contact for all issues related to certain identified projects. This program is described later in this letter.

### **QUESTIONS AND ISSUES THAT ARISE DURING THE DESIGN PHASE OF THE PROJECT**

The informal process currently used by the design community to communicate with the Fairfax County Water Authority, Fire Marshal, and EFRD staff has proven to be an effective means of resolving issues that arise during the design process. The following guidelines formalize this existing process and provide structure to the exchange of information and advice that may be required prior to plan submission. This process is not intended to replace the use of pre-submission meetings that will be discussed later, but its implementation may reduce the frequency of the need for such formal meetings. Simple or brief questions can continue to be addressed over the telephone.

The following guidelines should be used to raise questions and issues during the design phase of the project:

1. The request for information or advice should be made via *facsimile* to the Chief Site Review Engineer in EFRD serving the Magisterial District in which the project is located. The fax number is 703-324-8359.
2. If possible, a request should only be made once for each design aspect of the plan. For example, drainage related questions should not be posed until all or most of the drainage concerns/issues have been ascertained.
3. A sketch, if available, should accompany the request. The tax map reference, project number and rezoning case number should be included.
4. The requestor should provide any design alternatives that might be considered.
5. This process should *not* be used to ascertain information that is readily available from senior staff within the requestor's firm, the Zoning Ordinance, or the Public Facilities Manual.
6. The Chief Site Review Engineer who receives the request will respond within five working days, or call to indicate that more time/information is necessary.

It should be noted that agreements/suggestions made by EFRD staff in response to these fax requests are intended to assist the designer and shall not be binding nor considered to be final review comments. EFRD may revise or alter previous comments after the formal plan submission is made, due to changed circumstances, incomplete information, etc.

## **IDENTIFICATION AND DISCUSSION OF KEY ISSUES JUST PRIOR TO PLAN SUBMISSION**

For projects that either exhibit unique constraints or are considered large enough in scale that the coordination of the various phases will likely play a significant role in the processing of the overall project, a formal meeting to identify and discuss key issues prior to plan submission could be beneficial. This meeting would give the designer an opportunity to present the project to the review staff from the various offices that will be reviewing the plan submission. These "Pre-Submission Presentations" will facilitate the communication between the designer and the regulatory community in the submission, review and approval of land development plans. To facilitate scheduling, these presentations will be conducted on Thursday afternoons at the County offices. In most cases, projects being considered for a Pre-Submission Presentation should generally be no less than 90% complete in terms of the design and should have all requisite zoning approvals prior to the applicant requesting the opportunity to participate in a presentation.

If warranted due to circumstances with a particular project, the EFRD Director may consider a request to schedule a presentation earlier in the design phase.

The following guidelines should be followed when requesting and participating in a Pre-Submission Presentation:

1. When an applicant feels a project may benefit from a Pre-Submission Presentation and the project falls within the guidelines noted above, a request to schedule a presentation may be made to the appropriate EFRD Director. If in the judgment of the Director such a presentation would benefit the project, a meeting date will be scheduled.
2. The applicant should assess the potential issues likely to effect the project and identify the specific agencies whose staff attendance would be beneficial.
3. At least five days prior to the meeting, the applicant should submit an agenda outlining the scope of the project and identifying any specific concerns and/or design constraints that merit special attention.
4. EFRD staff will schedule the presentation to be held the next available Thursday afternoon in the County offices. EFRD staff will invite the identified agencies and will notify the applicant by telephone no fewer than five (5) working days prior to the scheduled meeting date.
5. In general, the Pre-Submission Presentation will consist of the following:
  - Ten-minute overview of the proposed project presented by the applicant and/or his agents. The presentation shall include the agenda items identified as potentially problematic.
  - A question and answer period whereby review agency representatives will have an opportunity to better understand the project.
  - An opportunity for discussion of any new issues that may have surfaced as a result of the foregoing discussion.
  - The Presentation will be concluded with a summary, presented by the applicant, of all issues discussed and any recommendations that may have been reached as a result of the meeting. A written copy of this summary will be prepared by the applicant and distributed to all attendees, as well as to Peer Review, for future reference.
  - As a guideline, these meetings should typically be completed within one hour.

## **QUESTIONS AND ISSUES THAT ARISE AS A RESULT OF THE REVIEW OF THE FIRST SUBMISSION OF THE PLAN**

In order to resolve issues that arise after plan submission, the current Post Submission Conference format as detailed in the ESI document "The Expedited Site and Subdivision Plan Review Process for Fairfax County", revised October, 2000, is hereby revised as follows:

1. If desired, the applicant (the submitting Project Coordinator) may request that the EFRD review engineer schedule a Post Submission Conference. A conference will only be scheduled if requested by the applicant.
2. The request for a Post Submission Conference must be made a minimum of seven (7) working days prior to the desired meeting date and must include a list of additional agencies whose staff attendance would be beneficial.
3. The EFRD review engineer will schedule the Post Submission Conference and will invite the appropriate staff from the agencies requested by the applicant. If no specific request is made by the applicant for additional staff to attend, only EFRD staff will attend the meeting with the applicant.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF A PROJECT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM**

It has been suggested that EFRD identify a project manager for every plan that is submitted and that the project manager would be a single point of contact for all issues related to the plan. While it is not practical to assign a project manager for every plan, this approach could be beneficial for some projects. Therefore, effective immediately, a Project Management Program is being implemented as follows.

If an applicant feels that a given project will benefit from participation in the program, the applicant should schedule a meeting with the appropriate EFRD Director to discuss the specifics of the project, including, but not limited to, the number of sections in the project, soils, Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance and floodplain implications, and the required level of outside approvals, i.e., Board of Supervisors, Board of Zoning Appeals, etc.

The EFRD Director will evaluate the information provided, the current workload within the Division, and the overall benefits of including the project in the program. If the Director agrees that the project would be an acceptable candidate for the Project Management approach, an Engineer II within EFRD will be assigned as Project Manager. The Project Manager will then be the one point of contact for all inquiries related to the project.

The above procedures are being implemented to improve and enhance the communication mechanisms that exist between the design industry and EFRD staff.

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If you have any questions concerning the above, please contact Ray Curd, Director, Code Analysis Division at 703-324-1720.

Sincerely,

***SIGNATURE ON ORIGINAL***

Michelle Brickner, Director

MB/dah

cc: Robert A. Stalzer, Deputy County Executive  
John Wesley White, Director, Department of Public Works and Environmental Services